

that they would degenerate. For all that, they live contentedly and would certainly be happy if the Christian religion were to temper a little their barbarity and filth.

646 One asks why there are so few of them, given the multitudes of women. They reply that the Christians are to blame, because, as one of them told Father Raymond, the Spanish on two occasions massacred all the Caribs on the island of Saint Christopher, and once those of Guadeloupe, from which it is said only one woman escaped to the mountains with her children to people that region. The Spanish wanted to do the same at Dominica and massacred a good half of the Caribs there. Since then the Caribs have been victims of smallpox, which they call variola, and of which several rotted and died, since they did not yet know a remedy for this disease. In short, they have been captured or killed by everybody: Flemish, English, Spanish, and the Allouagues, who are their enemies.

[49]

CHAPTER II

Their Language

191 The language of the Caribs is different from that of the Galibis of the mainland. It is difficult to learn for several reasons. The first is that they do not record it in writing or in any character. It therefore requires great patience in listening and close attention to distinguish their words, which they spout out rapidly, and also a great memory to retain what one has been able to gather. The second is that they have several sorts of languages. The men have theirs and the women theirs, and there is still another for harangues and important speeches that even the young people do not understand well. The third is that they have no words at all to express the powers of the soul, such as the will, the understanding, nor any words for what concerns religion or politeness. They have no term of honor such as 'Our Father.' They express, however, several acts of the understanding and of the will, such as to remember and to wish. In other things the tongue is copious and rather pretty. They sometimes sing their songs in a tone which is not agreeable and is very simple. They sing whatever occurs to them without rhyme and very often without reason, especially against their enemies.

4. Warfare

226 The Caribs never go to war openly against their enemies, but only attack them by surprise. Nevertheless, they make great preparations, assembling many pirogues and canoes. They only take one woman into each boat to comb their hair and paint them, as well as to prepare their food. Finally they arrive at the place agreed upon. If they are discovered they utter cries which terrify everyone, and they kill all whom they chance to meet. They let loose a flight of arrows to which burning cotton is fastened and set fire to everything.

227 Three hours later they retire until they plan some new enterprise. They kill their prisoners with blows of clubs. If some of the prisoners are women they take them home and give them to the old men as wives and slaves. If they capture male children they regard them as slaves, but if the males are older they force them to fast, because the Caribs do not like to eat fat, and then they kill them. [375]

228 The Caribs during their drinking parties, which sometimes last 229 two or three days, make speeches to each other about the great exploits of their ancestors. This is to arouse their spirits and make them fight more bravely against their enemies. The women and the young 230 people do not understand this language. Only in the speeches which they make during the work parties, do they use a style which although very elaborate, is nevertheless intelligible to all. [376] All their harangues, which they make so frequently, are only war speeches to excite themselves against their enemies. Even the human flesh they eat at this time is for this same purpose, because they eat it in such small quantities. However, I think that when they have it in large quantities they eat all they can, because I heard it said here that when they killed three of our missionaries at Puerto Rico they smoked them. But during the meal they became so greatly disgusted that they dared not look at them. [221]

When they are going to eat an Arawak there is singing, dancing, and rejoicing. At the beginning of my stay in Dominica, my host, Captain Baron, had killed and brought back an Arawak from South America. He had a great drinking party and invited anyone who wished to come. He gave each woman a part of the Arawak to cook in her own pot so that she could eat it with her husband and family who were in the assembly. This they did with great enjoyment during the day. After having drunk and been entertained in their

LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY

- 191 The last Carib in Dominica to speak the native Indian idiom as their mother tongue died some 20 to 25 years ago. But even 60 years ago, at the time of Ober's first visit, the language was employed only by a small minority of older men and women. The urge for economic contacts with the Creole-negro population surrounding them combined, in all probability, with the priests' disapproval of continued isolation of a flock whose conversion was henceforth secure, ended in the adoption of that lingua franca of the West Indies, Creole patois. Those Carib who today remember some smattering of their fathers' and mothers' tongue regard such knowledge rather in the light of a joke.

[192] Whether the proverbial distinction between the men's and the women's languages persisted to the end is hard to say, but it is certain that some of the words given below belong to the Carib, and others—the majority—to the Arawak stock of languages. Creole patois itself is rich in the debris of many tongues and it is to be hoped that some philologist will soon undertake its excavation.

- 192 The following vocabulary is neither exhaustive of living linguistic vestiges nor is the whole of it necessarily known to any one person now living in the Reserve. My chief informants were: Jimmy (Dorder) Benjamin of Bataka and his brother, Jean Noël (now dead), "Fanfan" and Ma' Bernard of St. Cyr, Lucien of Walpina, Ma' Henri and her sister Ma' Janney of Bataka, and Choline and Chief Jolly John of Sta. Marie, Salybia. The latter furnished me with the song and some of the words, but was especially helpful in acting as my host, guide, and sponsor in the Reserve.

- [192] The words have been put down as they were given me—in their final form only after hearing them repeated many times by different people. Other vocabularies (in particular that of Father Raymond Breton, published 1665) have been consulted only as a check to word meaning and form. The spelling, as with all unwritten idioms, has been rather a problem. Breton wrote Carib like French, be tat the best, and apart from the fact that French pronunciation has changed since his time, such a method is clumsy. I very much regret not having had a recording apparatus, but have done my best with the means at my disposal. In general, and taking the following modifications into account, the vowels have been given their Latin values, while the consonants are as in English. Stress is denoted by the apostrophe, as in supplemen'tary.

a, as in father; ao, as in how; 4a, as in Portuguese "aê".

ä, as indefinite vowel sound in mother; becomes nasal when final.

ä, as "an" in French; ä, as in out.

e, as in wet; é, as em (final) in Portuguese.

é, as in French, etc.

1894.] *Aborigines of the West Indies.*

299

The Caribs have

an ancient and natural language, such as is peculiar to them, and also a bastard speech, with foreign words, chiefly Spanish, intermixed. Among themselves they always use the natural language, in conversing with Christians the bastard speech. . . . The women also have a different speech from the men. . . . It hath been observed that the men are less amorous than the women; both are naturally chaste; and when those of other nations look even earnestly at them, and laugh at their nakedness, they were wont to say to them, 'you are to look on us only between both the eyes.' . . . Yet, it must be confessed that some have degenerated from that chastity, and many other virtues of their ancestors, the Europeans having taught them many vices,—to the perpetual infamy of the Christian name. . . . They are great lovers of cleanliness, bathing every day; are generous, hospitable and honest. . . . It is also manifest truth, confirmed by daily experience in America, that the holy sacrament of baptism being conferred on these savages, the devil never beats or torments them afterwards as long as they live.¹

"The Carib boys were compelled to pierce their food suspended from a tree with an arrow, before they could eat it. . . . They are said to have used poisoned arrows, dipping them in what must have been the urari poison, obtained from Guiana. . . . Like many natives, they eradicated the beard and the hair on other parts of the body. . . . They compressed the skulls of new-born infants; and a hatred of the Arrowaks was instilled. . . . Their cabins were built of poles fixed circularly in the ground and drawn together at the top, covered with palm leaves, and in the centre of each village was a building larger than the others for public assemblage.

"The Caribbeans are a handsome, well-shaped people, of a smiling countenance, middle stature, having broad shoulders

¹ See Davier's "History of the Caribby Islands." London, 1802.

[173]

4. Dutertre (R. -P.), Histoire Générale des Antilles / General History of the Antilles/. Paris, 1658.

174 several other historians have set forth an opinion diametrically opposed to this. According to them, the Caribs of the Antilles came, on the contrary, from the Guianas, since they have heard the Indians themselves say that they were descended from the Galibis, who still inhabit these regions today. This is in harmony with the theory generally adopted by modern linguists, according to whom the origin of the Carib race, in its widest sense, would be found at a point in the center of Brazil, situated possibly to the north, possibly to the south, of the Amazon. It is from this point that the Caribs appear to have migrated to Guiana, whence they betook themselves to the Lesser Antilles, following almost the /131/ same route as their Arawak predecessors. This latter theory is today held by the most informed anthropologists and we shall see later that it is in part confirmed by the linguistic observations we have been able to make.

Wherever they came from the Caribs, (according to the most reliable writers), appear as they overran the islands to have massacred all the men and spared the women whom they made their wives or their slaves. These women were of the Arawak race and spoke a different language from that of the Caribs. An interesting fact, and one which is recounted by most travellers, is that this Arawak language perpetuated itself among the women from mother to daughter, while the men spoke Carib from father to son, the members of both sexes understanding, besides the two languages, but speaking only that which was proper to its own sex. Father Labat, after having related these facts, adds that there existed among the Caribs still a third language belonging to the warriors, but this third language is not mentioned in any other place. The duality of language, whose origin we have just shown, has been recorded at different times and was perpetuated for more than five centuries among the Caribs of the Antilles; even today there remain traces of it among the last members of this race whose present vocabulary still contains some Arawak words.

175 When Columbus landed in the Lesser Antilles, at Guadeloupe, at the time of his second voyage, in 1493, and in the other islands during his later voyages, he was always greeted with arrows by the Caribs; the Spanish also, who remembered these islanders unfavorably,

10:Neveu-Lemaire--5a K-5 (ca. 1920) 1921 ST13 Callinago
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3. Map of the Carib Territory

000 Spirit. The missionaries exhausted themselves in vain in the 17th
797 century in trying to inculcate in them the principles of Christianity
and several were massacred on the island of St. Vincent, so that by
the beginning of the 18th century they had given up converting them.
The Caribs sometimes let themselves be baptized because for them
it was an occasion for celebration and drinking, in addition to which
the governors or the principal inhabitants of the French islands took
pleasure in serving as their godparents and showered them with gifts;
but hardly had they reached home then they forgot all the instruction
they had received. "The reason for the small success of the mission-
aries in the conversion of the Caribs," says Father Dutertre, "is the
unfortunate impression which the life of the Christians had made on
them, strewn with cruelty and exhibiting habits more barbaric than
those of the islanders." Today the remaining Caribs are Catholics,
771 like most of the blacks of Dominica and their chief has even placed
a portrait of the Pope in a conspicuous place in his house. French
[793] priests serve as their pastors and there existed at Salybia, the principal
settlement of the territory, a little church which was blown down by
[374] a cyclone and which they are engaged in /143/ rebuilding. Next to
it is the only school in the region, attended by young Caribs and young
mestizos of both sexes.

191 The Caribs of Dominica are truly polyglot; they speak the French
patois with the blacks, which is the same in this island as in
Guadeloupe and Martinique; they know a few English words which
they use in their relations with officials or various merchants; finally,
among themselves, they still make use of a certain number of words
of their ancestral language, a language which includes, as we have
already seen, two idioms, one spoken by the men, the other by the
women.

115 One of my colleagues, born and long since settled in Dominica
but of a French family and having pursued his medical studies in
France, Dr. Daniel Thally was kind enough to give me a Carib
vocabulary which he collected in 1916 and 1918 from an old native
woman, the daughter of Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Louise, named
197 Rosalie who was between 75 and 80 years old. This vocabulary,
192 carefully studied on my return to France with the learned collabora-
tion of Dr. Rivet, allowed us to recover from it some words of the
Carib vocabulary of the Antilles as it was in the time of /145/ Father
Breton (1), who has left us a grammar and a dictionary of this

- (21) plaining changes in their social structure is universally recognized by ethnologists today. In an article on American culture history LOWIE recently wrote (36): « Another interesting question is how far the Southeast of the United States has been influenced by the Amazon-Orinoco area via the West Indies ». Further on he mentions the lack of published botanical data dealing with such plants as maize, manioc, and the species supplying fish poisons.

It is the hope of the present authors that at least some of the plant-lore of the Island Caribs may be permanently recorded in this publication. The aim of this paper is to provide accurate botanical and ethnographical information about species gathered or cultivated by the Caribs of Dominica not only today but also (as far as possible) in the past. Certain modern commercial crops — such as limes, oranges, and vanilla — which play a part in Carib economy today have been excluded. It is not claimed that all the species included in our list were found growing in the islands at the time of their discovery, for indeed a number of them are of Old World origin. The origin of such species is stated in the enumeration of plants.

II. HISTORICAL NOTES

- 101 At the time of the Spanish Conquest, the Greater Antilles and the Bahamas
174 were dominated by an Arawakan-speaking people with a stratified society and a religious cult involving priests and idols. These Tainos, as they have been called, practiced horticulture and made pottery, as did also another, more warlike people called *Magorixas* or *Ojogayas*, who occupied a part of north-eastern Hispaniola, but about whom little else is known. Nor can much be said about the primitive *Sikouyas* or *Ocuahitobeyas*, of whom only a few then remained in the western extremity of Cuba, except that they — unlike other inhabitants of the West Indian islands — had probably come from North America rather than from South America, and still had a non-horticultural and pre-ceramic culture.

- 191 The Lesser Antilles, from Tobago in the south to Vieques in the north-
198 west, were then occupied by a people called *Karipounas* or *Island Carib*, about whom the most widely known fact is that they all used two distinct languages: a « women's speech » belonging to the same linguistic stock (Arawakan) as did Taino, and a « men's speech » belonging to the Caribian family of languages. It is less generally known that, by the middle of the seventeenth century when these languages first were recorded, the latter had degenerated to a jargon in the sense that it could not be used for ordinary communication without resort to a host of grammatical words and affixes belonging to the « women's speech », which was in fact the first language of male and female allies. The

men's speech was then — and in all probability long had been — a secondary language learnt in late childhood for reasons of prestige. According to Island-Carib tradition, which there seems to be no cause for doubting, the explanation of this peculiar situation is that these islands had been conquered before the coming of the Europeans by a band of Galibi (Kali'ia or True Carib) warriors from Guiana, who had taken the female inhabitants to wife and killed all the men. F10
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[73]

What we may call the national language of the historical Island-Carib is no more Cariban than is English, since the Norman Conquest, a Romance language. But although it is, like them, Arawakan, Kariphuna (Island-Carib) appears to have emerged from the parent tongue centuries before Taino, Lokono, Gwajiro and Paraujano; and was therefore most probably brought to these islands by a separate migration. From radiocarbon dating it now appears, on the other hand, that the type of pottery known as 'White-on-red', and found only in the valley of the Orinoco and in the Antilles, was being made on the lower Orinoco as early as 800 B. C., while a pre-ceramic culture flourished at the same period on the neighbouring island of Trinidad. At that time, the ancestors of the above-named Arawakan-speaking tribes formed, in all likelihood, a united people speaking one language; and we may conjecture that the first split came about through a partial migration that took horticulture and pottery to Trinidad. The geographical situation in historical times of the Taino, Island-Carib, and Lokono further suggests that the first migrants spread in the course of time to other, more northerly islands, where they were subsequently cut off from their fellow tribesmen in Trinidad by a second migration from the mainland — that of the Island-Caribs' Arawakan-speaking ancestors, who had not participated in the first migration. 174
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It may be fairly assumed that horticulture and pottery were already known to an Arawakan-speaking tribe ancestral to all those we have mentioned so far; but it would not be surprising had the later migrants, whether friendly or hostile to the earlier settlers, introduced innovations that were welcome to the latter dwellers on the periphery of a culture-area. And indeed Taino and Island-Carib have in common several culture words that, whatever their ancestry, are not shared by Lokono or Gwajiro, whose basic vocabularies apparently are closer to that of Taino than to that of the Island-Carib. So, for example, the basketry 'sifter' is called *lêta* in Taino and *lêbet* in Island-Carib, but *mamê* (borrowed from a Cariban language) in Lokono; the little tree, *Bixa orellana*, whose fruit provided a red paint, is called *lêta* in Taino and *lêbet* in Island-Carib, but *orubaki* in Lokono; *Gouape americana*, whose fruit provided a black stain, is called *lêta* in Taino and *orubaki* in Island-Carib, but *lêta* in Lokono; and the pineapple is called *lêta* in both Taino and Island-Carib, but *orubaki* in Lokono. Institutional friendship, known both to the Taino and to the Island-Carib (but not to the Lokono), was designated as *orubaki* (by the former) or *orubaki* (by the latter) 'our friend', *lêta* (by the former) or *lêta* (by the latter) 'my friend'. This last example also suggests a closer genetic relationship between Taino and Lokono, which also has the prefix *di(a)-* as marker of first person singular; compare Lokono *delêda* 'my clan' with Island-Carib *delêda* 'my (fishing-) line', string (for bow), etc. 174
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Also the Carib invaders of the Lesser Antilles undoubtedly brought with them changes and innovations, many of which are reflected in the vocabulary. To judge from the latter, these mainly concerned affinal (as opposed to con-

128 need in the ENGLISH and PRANTL system (16), but the genera and species are listed alphabetically.

128 When available, the vernacular names are cited in three languages, English, Creole patois, and Carib. The English names represent those commonly used in neighboring British islands of the West Indies, and in cases they may have some usage in Dominica. The spoken language of the majority of the inhabitants of Dominica is an unwritten French "Creole" or "patois" whose vocabulary is 90 % of French ancestry with a syntax largely of African form. Patois names, therefore, form the bulk of the vernacular appellations used in the island. Although some Creole names of Dominica have been found to be identical with those applied to the same species in the French Antilles, many exceptions exist and it is not at all safe to infer that because the vernacular name in Guadeloupe or Martinique applies to one species it necessarily has to apply to the identical one when it occurs in Dominica. Indeed there are instances in Dominica where a single patois name is applied to widely different species (e.g. bois chandelle, bois tan, laraki, mang'-rouge, mibi, save-nette, and the like).

Some of the patois names (e.g. cachaibo, caronier, courburi, kalabouli, yanga, etc.) stem from Carib or Arawak names. But aboriginal names are comparatively few for no longer is the Carib language spoken; its use having passed out with the last generation. The Indian names¹ included in this work have been obtained from various sources, but chiefly from older Carib informants and certain early authors (7) (41) (42). In a number of cases two aboriginal names are listed. This reflects the bilingual structure of a tongue composed of both Carib (men's) and Arawak (women's) idioms. In such instances in the text, names used by the men are indicated by the symbol (m), while those used by the women are followed by the symbol (w).

104 In the discussion of the individual economic plants the majority of patois names are written in French orthography while the spelling of Carib words is phonetic.

128 Two parts of this paper, "Historical Notes" and the "Index to Carib Names of Plants", were revised just before this contribution went to the editor. While every reasonable care has been taken to bring the text in line with changes made, readers are requested to overlook any apparent inconsistencies in the spelling of native names.

Geographical ranges of the plant species are given in order to give a possible clue as to the origin of the species. This is especially important in an archipelago like the Lesser Antilles which is considered to possess a biota of wall origin. These geographical data have been compiled from West Indian floras (8) (10) (64) (67), as well as from specimens in the collections of the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University. The altitudinal distribution in Dominica of the various species is indicated by three approximate phrases: lower elevations (sea level to 1000 feet), middle elevations (1000-2000 feet), and higher elevations (2000 feet and above).

Specimen citations of the plants used by the Island Caribs have been included at the end of the discussion of each species. Collection numbers followed by the symbol (T) indicate herbarium specimens made by Douglas Taylor; all others are from the collections of Walter E. and Barbara T.

¹ All aboriginal (Carib or Arawak) names used in this paper are italicized.